

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EGEN, PERP, GB, GW

SUBJECT: WEST GERMAN OPPOSITION LEADER VISITS GABON

1. SUMMARY: FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (FRG) OPPOSITION LEADER FRANZ-JOSEPH STRAUSS VISITED GABON JUNE 12 - 14 AT INVITATION OF PRESIDENT BONGO. FROM REPORTS THUS FAR AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY, PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS TO INTENSIFY GABONESE/GERMAN COMMERCIAL RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY TO INCREASE FRG INVESTMENT IN GABON, BUT POLITICAL QUESTIONS WERE ALSO TOUCHED UPON. END SUMMARY

2. IN TWO DAY VISIT TO GABON, JUNE 12 -14, FRG OPPOSITION LEADER FRANZ-JOSEPH STRAUSS CONCENTRATED ON ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL TOPICS WHILE NOT EXCLUDING POLITICAL QUESTIONS. HE TOURED FRANCEVILLE, MOANDA AND MOUNANA AND OBSERVED ACTIVITIES OF COMILOG (MANGANESE MINING), COMUF (URANIUM), AND SOSUHO (SUGAR CANE PLANTATION AND REFINERY). IN PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN UPON HIS RETURN TO LIBREVILLE, STRAUSS COMMENTED THAT HE WAS IMPRESSED BY LEVEL OF INDUSTRIALIZATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN GABON. HE STATED THAT COMMERCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES WOULD BE INTENSIFIED AS WOULD GERMAN INVESTMENT IN GABON.

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3. WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT LOW LEVEL OF GERMAN INVESTMENT IN AFRICA, STRAUSS ATTRIBUTED THIS TO GERMAN NATIONALISM AND NEED TO REBUILD GERMAN ECONOMY AFTER WORLD WAR II, YET HE POINTED OUT THAT LEVEL OF GERMAN INVESTMENT IN SEVERAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES WAS SIGNIFICANT.

4. PRESS CONFERENCE SUMMARY MENTIONED THAT IN MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BONGO, WHO HAD INVITED STRAUSS TO GABON, BONGO HAD GIVEN STRAUSS GENERAL OVERVIEW OF AFRICAN PROBLEMS. STRAUSS IN TURN, HAD DISCUSSED ROLE OF OPPOSITION IN GERMAN POLITICS, TERRORISM IN EUROPE, AND SUPPORT OF GERMAN OPPOSITION FOR AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS.TIENKEN

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